

Washington, D.C. – This week, Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-19) and Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16) announced new legislation to strengthen federal efforts to end homelessness among America's veterans.

"While we've made dramatic improvements over the last decade to reduce veteran homelessness, we still have significant work ahead of us to ensure that no one who served is left out in the cold while making the transition to civilian life," said Congressman Rooney. "This legislation builds on successful support programs to help fulfill our debt to those who put their lives on the line in defense of our country."

"The Helping Homeless Heroes Act of 2011 honors our responsibility to ensure that no American who dons the uniform of the United States becomes a forgotten hero after their mission is complete," said Congressman Deutch. "Our servicemen and women endure unimaginable sacrifices while serving our nation, we cannot stand by while so many of them are going homeless."

Over the last decade, significant progress has been made reducing the number of homeless servicemen and women, from more than 300,000 in 2003 to less than 150,000 in 2009. The Helping Homeless Heroes Act reauthorizes and improves several programs responsible for much of this progress.

The bill, H.R. 2259 would:

- Reauthorize critical programs like the Department of Labor-Veterans' Employment and Training Service's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, the only nationwide employment assistance program dedicated to homeless veterans;
- Reevaluate the repayment method of VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD), a transitional housing program that is the foundation of VA and community partnerships; and,
- Expand VA Special Needs grants to include male homeless veterans with minor dependents, as well as allowing dependents of veterans in those programs to directly receive services.

"This bill would reauthorize highly successful programs that have helped reduce the number of homeless veterans by about 70 percent in the last eight years," said John Driscoll, President and CEO of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. "These programs have received strong bipartisan support throughout that time, and are absolutely critical in the national

campaign to end veteran homelessness by 2015. Both the House and Senate deserve commendation for their proud legacy of aiding veterans in crisis and their families – especially veterans with mental illness, other disabilities, and serious barriers to housing and employment.”

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